



The Caring Difference

The Newsletter of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board

A f t e r a l l , a h o m e s h o u l d b e f o r e v e r . . .

New CATS tracking system improves CFCRB's record-keeping capability

After months of testing and tweaking, the Children's Automated Tracking System, known as CATS, is now handling the data collection and record keeping for the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards. CATS replaces the Foster Care Tracking System (FCTS), which had been in use since 1997.

"CATS greatly improves our ability to track the information required by



federal and state laws, and to provide reports on a timely basis," said Kevin Smalley, assistant general manager for the Dependent Children's Services

Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

"This data enables officials to improve abuse, neglect and dependency proceedings by determining how best to meet a child's needs, and whether or not placements are appropriate and case plans are in compliance," added Smalley. He said CATS will provide improvements to the review process:

- The new form eliminates the need for a reviewer to complete a second children's list. Items needed from the children's list now appear on the form.
- The form incorporates ideas proposed by the CFCRB's Legislative and Executive committees.

- The new form incorporates a "one child, one form" philosophy that eliminates confidentiality issues related to keeping reviews in court files. An example is when one child's file contains information on other children.
- The new form will be preprinted with items that do not change from review to review. The reviewer will no longer have to reprint items that do not change.
- The new form provides ample room for comments.
- Finally, and most importantly, the new form encompasses all required federal and state statutory language for reviews.

Smalley explained that the former FTCS system did not track all of the data required by state and federal statutes. As a result, each year data had to be manually collected from a sample of reviews to meet those requirements. This extra step is no longer necessary now that CATS can track every review in its entirety.

A key feature of CATS is its ability to transfer basic data from the TWIST system, used by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, directly into the CATS system via a weekly file transfer. As a result, the Cabinet can notify the AOC of children entering and leaving foster care, as required by statute, on a much more timely basis. While the system is not completely integrated with TWIST, the file transfer will help ensure that every child receives a review from the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards.



Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert spoke on the benefits of adoption to a crowd of about 50 adoptive parents and their children as part of the Adoption Day Celebration in Jefferson County. See article on back page.

What's Inside

- 2 Message From the State Chair
- 3 Message From the DCS Manager
- 3 One Child's Courage to Survive
- 4 Staff Changes
- 4 A View From the Bench
- 5 2005 Regional Trainings
- 6 Board Spotlight
- 7 New Review Form
- 7 Q & A
- 8 Adoption Day a Huge Success

Message From The State Chair



By Angie Funk

I want to share with you an exciting opportunity that Commissioner Tom Emberton, Jr. of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services(CHFS) has offered to us as volunteer reviewers. In an effort to improve the communication between reviewers and the Cabinet with regards to children entering and exiting care, we have been invited to attend Family Team Meetings (FTMs). Per the Cabinet, these meetings are defined as "the highest level of comprehensive family services."

FTMs requires "a client and family member(s), worker (may also include internal partners) and community partners participating in a family meeting" where a "family-driven plan is created with assigned tasks and timelines."

The CFCRB staff is currently researching what our role would be, if we can obtain "qualified observer" status so we can attend the meetings, and how the meetings can integrate with the CFCRB Interested Party Reviews (IPRs).

There are many details to be worked out, but I definitely believe we are on the right track and heading toward our goal of **strong local boards**. FTMs, along with the Adoption Days that took place in June, are two ways for us to become more effective child advocates. I'm looking for more. Please e-mail me or call if you have ideas!

Multimedia Resource Center at AOC is nearing completion

By Shelly Meyer

The new multimedia Resource Center, located at the Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort, is nearing completion. We are compiling a list of all of the materials and devising a system to distribute them.

In addition to books and videos, we are putting together a list of pertinent Web sites. If you have found a Web site that would be beneficial to other volunteers,

please send that information to Bruce Jones at the AOC. And if you have materials you want to donate to the Resource Center, take them to your field coordinator at your next board meeting. The field coordinators will see that donations are added to the library. An attractive bookplate will be placed inside the books to recognize those who donated them to the Resource Center.

The Resource Center materials can be used to fulfill the six-hour

training requirement for CFCRB members. The Training Committee is creating a system that will assign credit hours to the available resources.

Look for more information on this exciting development in the next issue of

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Positive Change for the Child Protection System



By Kevin Smalley,
Manager,
Dependent
Children's
Services Division

The past few months have produced many achievements in the Dependent Children's Services Division. The 2005 Adoption Day initiative was a successful collaboration among Family Court, CFCRB and the Department for Community Based Services. During the week of June 1-8, 117 children were adopted, which proves that when everyone works together, adoptions can occur in a timely manner. The knowledge we gained while planning Adoption Day will greatly benefit the courts and DCBS when handling future adoptions.

After years of planning and months of hard work, the new Children's Automated Tracking System (CATS) was instituted Oct. 3. CATS will provide instant access to statistics on a county, board or state level. The system also gives reviewers a new review form that replaces the old review form and the children's list. Fixed information, such as a child's name, date of birth, race, sex, court case number and removal date, are preprinted on the form. A separate form is provided for each child in the case to allow the reviews to be placed in their individual files without breaching the privacy of the other children. This will be a huge benefit to the CFCRB reviewers and the courts.

We hosted four regional conferences in August and five in October. These have been well attended. The semiannual regional

conferences offer the required training hours for CFCRB members at a location that is more convenient for a larger number of people.

The CFCRB State Board held a productive meeting Nov. 5 at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington.

And last, but not least, my daughter, Elizabeth Mae, was born April 14 and has become the light of my life. As you can tell from the picture, she had me wrapped around her little finger from the very beginning!



Kevin Smalley holds new daughter, Elizabeth Mae.

Book Review:

A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive



By Shelly Meyer
CFCRB Volunteer, Fayette County

In this unsettling account, author Dave Pelzer tells the story of his abuse, neglect and torture at the hands of his mother when he was a little boy. The sequel, *The Lost Boy*, is his story from age 12 to 18. The conclusion, *A Man Named Dave*, is the final book in his trilogy.

Dave's life begins with a happy, loving family. He enjoys family vacations, interesting outings and scrumptious meals prepared by his mother who is a gifted cook. The house is neat and clean. He and his brothers share chores, games and many pets. The holidays are exciting and elaborate. He described his family as the "Brady Bunch of the 1960s."

When he was 5 years old, his mother's behavior changed severely. Regular beatings, bizarre searches for her missing things, isolation and intense humiliation were the beginning of the escalating violence. His brothers and father watched, and were eventually unmoved, by the relentless cruelty inflicted upon this helpless child. Food was withheld for long periods of time and, when offered,

it was food rejected by the dogs. The torture became more and more hideous. The resolve that had kept him alive for years started to erode. When his father left the family, he knew he would be killed by his mother and he offered the deliverance of his soul to God.

The events in this book are disturbing. It is a candid look at ruthless child abuse and a child's will to survive. Dave Pelzer writes: "Even though I had heard the same words over and over again, this time the word "It" stunned me like never before. My morale had become so low that in some self-destructive way I hoped she would kill me, and I felt that eventually she would."

It is not the author's intention to make us feel revolted, but to give his horrific experience value. He survived so that others will know what really exists. He wants awareness and intolerance of child abuse.

Because parts of this book are sickening and haunting, it will strengthen the resolve of those who read it and care about children to find more and better ways to save them from harm. Dave Pelzer's childhood will seep into your conscience and change you.

A Child Called "It": One Child's Courage to Survive, Dave Pelzer, Health Communications, Inc., © 1995, 184 pages.

Staff Changes in Dependent Children's Services

We want to keep CFCRB volunteers apprised of the new employees, vacancies and new assignments that have taken place within Dependent Children's Services.

Staff Changes

We want to welcome Melissa Spicer Goins and Deb Yates to the Dependent Children's Services staff. Both came from the Court Designated Worker Program.

Melissa is a 2002 graduate of Georgetown College where she received a bachelor's degree in psychology and communications. She worked for the Department for Community Based Services for a short time before serving as a court designated worker for about three years. Melissa is currently pursuing a master's degree in social work at the University of Kentucky. Melissa recently married Nathan Goins and they are living in Frankfort. Her office is at the Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort and her cell number is 502-545-1612.

Debbie Yates has worked for the AOC for nearly 19 years. Her most recent position was with the CDW Program in Bowling Green. She lives and works in Columbia, where her new office is located at 105 Campbellsville Road. Debbie has two daughters and one grandson,

with another grandchild on the way. Her office number is 800-207-2178 and her cell number is 502-545-8530.

Deb Bennett has transferred to the CDW Program as a diversion coordinator.

Michael Broughton left Sept. 15 to accept a position with the federal prison system.

Kari Hutchison left the department Sept. 24 to open a group home for girls in the Bowling Green area.

John Burgess left the division Oct. 21 to take an advertising position with Verizon Information Systems.

Danielle Meyer's office has been moved to McCracken County. Her new office number is 866-551-1623.

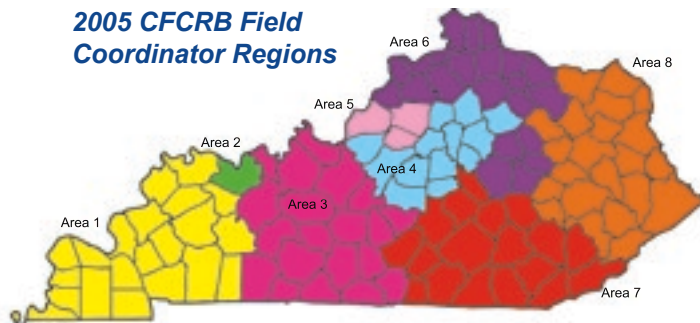
Bruce Jones and Melissa Huffman will be conducting the Interested Party Reviews on a statewide basis.

Regional Territory Changes

Danielle Meyer will keep her existing boards with the following exceptions: Logan and Simpson will be transferred to the new field coordinator and Danielle will acquire Hopkins and Muhlenberg.

Melissa Goins has taken over Anderson, Bourbon, Boyle, Bullitt,

2005 CFCRB Field Coordinator Regions



Fayette, Franklin, Jessamine, Marion, Mercer, Nelson, Scott, Washington, and Woodford.

Debbie Yates will cover Michael Broughton's former area except that she will gain Adair, Casey, Clinton, Russell and Wayne counties. She will transfer Knott, Letcher and Perry to Toni Mullins.

Mae Philbeck will pick up Powell County and transfer Bourbon to Melissa Goins. She will also be cover the area previously held by Bruce Jones, in addition to Clark, Estill, Madison and Oldham counties.

A new field coordinator will be hired for the Bowling Green office to cover the following boards: Allen, Barren, Breckinridge, Butler, Cumberland, Edmonson, Grayson, Green, Hancock, Hardin, Hart, Larue, Logan, Meade, Metcalfe, Monroe, Ohio, Simpson, Taylor and Warren. Melissa Huffman will be covering these boards until the new coordinator is on board.



A View From the Bench

*By Circuit Judge Pamela Addington
Hardin County Family Court*

As we prepared for our "Adoption Day" events in June, we looked forward with great anticipation to seeing the happy faces before us when the Family Court judges granted the various adoptions.

Adoptions are clearly the most

exciting events that Family Court judges experience on the bench. Since January, there have been 22 adoptions granted in Hardin County. While adoptions are a happy experience, I cannot help but ponder the other aspects of adoptions, such as the termination

of parental rights. I have been on the bench for almost one year, and the few involuntary termination of parental rights cases that I have presided over are the most difficult cases to decide.

Many times it appears that the best interests of the child, and the standard of "clear and convincing evidence" to terminate parental rights, are on a collision course. Adequate training for the guardian *ad litem* is essential. The Family Court concept of "one family, one court and one judge" is vital to today's families.

Regional trainings, board meeting benefit volunteers

By Mae Philbeck, CFCRB Liasion

In 2005, Dependent Children's Services conducted nine regional trainings at Blue Licks State Park, Bowling Green, Carter Caves State Park, Jenny Wiley State Park, Kenlake State Park, Lexington, Louisville, Owensboro and Somerset.

The Training Committee developed an agenda that would be interesting and insightful. There were presentations on timelines relating to the Cabinet for Health

and Family Services, the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards and permanency planning, and information on local services available for children and families. Comments from the 153 CFCRB members who attended said that the sessions were informative, pertinent and well-organized.

Service Awards

The meetings also gave the Recognition Committee the opportunity to honor the volunteers. CFCRB volunteers received pins for

five and 10 years of service. In addition, several volunteers were recognized with special awards recognizing their service to CFCRB:

Janet London
Barren and Metcalfe
County Boards

Ann Goodwin
Daviness County
B Board

Dennis Johnson
Lee, Owsley and
Estill County Boards

Jim Regan
Scott County Board

Carolyn Warren
Madison County
A Board

Kimberly Sanders-Castle
Floyd County Board

Bob Meadows
Rowan County Board

Starkey Ray
Montgomery County
Board

Sandra Gottschalk
McCracken County
A Board

Karen Guthrie
Calloway County
Board

Karen Phillips
Jefferson County 6
Board

Beth Lucas

Fayette County B Board

Martha Blevins

Pulaski A, McCreary and Wayne
County Boards

We appreciate the judges who made the awards presentations:

Judge Jeanne' Carroll

District Court, Calloway County

Judge Stephen George

Family Court, Jefferson County

Judge Margaret Huddleston

Family Court, Warren County

Judge Lisa Jones

District Court, Daviess County

Judge Debra Lambert

Family Court, Lincoln, Pulaski
and Rockcastle Counties

Judge David Melcher

Family Court, Harrison, Nicholas
and Pendleton Counties

Judge John David Preston

Family Court, Johnson, Lawrence
and Martin Counties

Judge Larry Thompson

Family Court, Pike County

Judge Jo Ann Wise

Family Court, Fayette County

Dependent Children's Services staff appreciate the assistance from the CFCRB regional representatives, the state vice chair and the other volunteers who helped make these programs a success.

State Board Meeting

State Chair Angie Funk presided over the annual state board meeting Nov. 5 at the Marriott Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington. Thirty board chairs attended.

Kevin Smalley and Angie Funk presented their annual reports. Each standing committees reported on its accomplishments of the last year. Regional representatives provided updates on their respective areas. And the state board approved all legislative recommendations and by-laws changes.

Angie Funk and Beth Lucas reviewed results from a recent survey and discussed several short-term planning goals that would benefit the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards. A Strategic Planning Committee was appointed for 2006.5



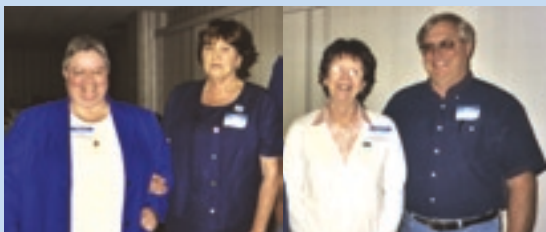
Dennis Johnson, Ann
Goodwin and Judge Lisa Jones



Judge Margaret
Huddleston and
Janet London



Linda Montell and
Susan Hook



From left: Charlene Greer, Aggie Butler, Ann Morgan
and Tom Stevenson



From left: Judge Deborah Lambert, Armina Howard, Laura
Smedley and Martha Blevins



Spotlight On: Boyd & Kenton Counties



Boyd County

By Toni Mullins, Field Coordinator

The Boyd County board gets one Friday a month at the Department for Community Based Services. The



Boyd County CFCRB board members are, left to right, Rod Helmick, Shannon Shields and Christy Reaves.

board members are an eclectic mix, including long-term board members Rod Helmick, who comes from Carter County to review cases and keep everyone entertained; Christy Reaves, former board chairperson, current vice chair and chair of the Legislative Committee; and current chair Shannon Shields.

They welcome assistance with the rather heavy case load. New board members are Bob Tackett, a member of the Carter and Greenup boards and an adoptive parent; John Steins, a member of the U.S. Coast Guard; Kevin Sloas; Loretta Layne; Joe Bounds; Sandra Hall and Colleen Hayes.

Kenton County

By Bruce Jones, Field Coordinator

The Kenton C CFCRB is a veteran board whose members are dedicated to the children they review and are diligent in their efforts to help the children reach permanency. Mary Lou Ringo, Shirley Ringo and Carol Dewald have more than 30 years of combined service with review boards. Mary Lou serves as chair of the local board and Shirley serves as vice chair. William Miller and Martha Goodwin are recent members of the board who both believe that the CFCRB is important because of the work done on behalf of the children.

Each member helps ensure that every foster child receives independent, timely, high-quality case reviews. This board is unique because of its dedication to the children in the community and its close professional relationship with the staff of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. It is a privilege to work with this board.



The members of the Kenton C CFCRB are, left to right, William Miller, Carol Dewald, Shirley Ringo and Mary Lou Ringo.

Calendar of Events

2006 CFCRB Conference

Oct. 27-29

Executive Inn Hotel, Louisville

The 2006 CFCRB Conference will take place at the Executive Inn in Louisville. The date for the conference has been changed to the last weekend in October instead of the first weekend in November because of a shortage of hotel rooms in early November.

CFCRB volunteers will receive notices in July and registration forms in August.

The Conference Committee is working hard to determine the theme of the conference and to choose training categories that will prove beneficial to the volunteers.

Mark your calendars to attend the 2006 CFCRB Conference Oct. 27-29. We look forward to seeing you there!

New review form streamlines paperwork for volunteers



The new review form was developed with the oversight of the Legislative and Executive Committees to address the specific requests of each group. It is always a challenge to balance everyone's ideas into one final product, but the CFCRB review

form reflects all of these ideas, as well as all federal and state requirements, for case review. The end product is a concise yet comprehensive review form.

The new form eliminates the need for a reviewer to complete a separate children's list. The review forms sent to the chair take the place of the children's list. The information necessary to determine the status of a case has been incorporated into the form,

which streamlines the paperwork for the reviewer.

For several years judges have been requesting a form for each child in a case. This, too, has been accomplished with the new review form. Individual children now have their own separate court file. This eliminates any concerns about confidentiality that arose when all individuals of a case were listed on the old forms.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of the new form is that it will allow all static, unchanging items to be preprinted. The new Children's Automated Tracking System, or CATS, allows this advantage, which makes the reviewer's job easier. The reviewer will be able to concentrate on what matters most, the actual findings and recommendations for the court that are in the best interests of the child.

When a child is in a private child care placement, what services does DCBS provide and what services does private child care placement provide?

Submitted by Mary Jo Little, Webster County CFCRB

Answered by Dolores Smith, Professional Services Supervisor

First of all, private child care placements can vary from a private child care foster home to a private child care facility. The Department for Community Based Services provides services to the family in the home while the child is in a private child care placement. For example, if a child is placed in a private child care foster home and the permanency goal is return to parent, DCBS provides services to the parents and/or other family members in the home to help make reunification possible.

If the child is placed in a private child care facility that has an on-site therapist, that facility may also provide family counseling. If the child in the private child care placement has had his or her parental rights terminated, DCBS works on permanency planning for the child. This includes finding an adoptive placement. DCBS is responsible for casework and placement decisions, while the private child care placement is responsible for providing services needed on a daily basis to carry out the case plan goals and objectives for the child. The DCBS caseworker has quarterly face-to-face contact and monthly phone contact with a child in a private child care placement. The DCBS caseworker is also responsible for the out-of-home care case plan for the child in addition to the continuous quality assessment.

The private child care placement staff is responsible for visiting the child twice a month and sending a monthly progress report to the DCBS. In most cases, the private child care placement should pay all expenses for the child out of the per diem that the DCBS is paying the private child care placement. The private child care placement has contracted with DCBS to provide for the child's care on a daily basis; this means the private child care placement makes arrangements for counseling, school needs and medical treatment. However, the private child care placement cannot sign for medical treatment for the child, as that agency does not have legal custody of the child. The DCBS is responsible for that.



2005 Adoption Day is a Huge Success

A challenge from Chief Justice Joseph E. Lambert to Family Court resulted in Kentucky hosting its first statewide Adoption Day during June 1-8, 2005. When the event was over, 117 adoptions had been finalized throughout Kentucky.

Those professionally connected with child protection already know of the many children waiting to be adopted. Reviewers know how devastating it can be for children to live for years without a permanent home. The silent success of Adoption Day is that people who were not aware of these children read about them in their local paper or heard about them on the radio or television.

Adoption Days helped people realize how many children who are waiting for a safe and loving home.



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